1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

231 about Rs. 30. The price of lac has risen a good deal of late
435 years. Formerly the price was about Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 a maund. The lac trade in the Jaintia Hills and in the southern portion of the Khyrim State is a valuable one. The profits, how-
426 ever, go largely to middle-men, who in the Jaintia Hills are Syntengs from Jowai, who give out advances to the Bhoi cultivators on the condition that they will be repaid in lac.
443 The Marwari merchants from the plains attend all the plains
439 markets which are frequented by the hill-men, and buy up the lac and export it to Calcutta. The whole of the lac is of the kind known as stick lac.

HUNTING.

224 The weapons used by the Khasis for hunting are bows and
[411] arrows, the latter with barbed iron heads, and spears which are used both for casting and thrusting. Before proceeding on a
[787] hunting expedition the hunters break eggs, in order to ascertain whether they will be successful or not, and to which jungle
[176] they should proceed. Offerings are also made to certain village deities, e.g. *U. Ryngkew*, *u Basa*, and *u Basa ki mrád*. A lucky day having been selected and the deities propitiated, the hunters start with a number of dogs trained to the chase, the latter being held on leashes by a party of men called *ki nong-ai-ksew*. When the dogs have picked up the scent some hunters are placed as "stops" (*ki ktem*), at points of vantage in the jungle, and the drive commences with loud shouts from the hunters, the same being continued until the object of the chase breaks into the open. The man who draws the first blood is called *u nongsiat*, and the second man who scores a hit *u nongban*. These two men get larger shares of the flesh than the others. The *nongsiat* obtains the lower half of the body of the animal, thighs and feet excepted, called *ka tdong*, and the *nongban* one of the forequarters called *ka tabla*. The other hunters obtain a string of flesh each, and each hound gets a string of flesh to itself. These hunting parties pursue deer
224 sometimes for many miles, and are indefatigable in the chase,
782 the latter lasting occasionally more than one day. In the Jaintia Hills, at the end of the chase, the quarry is carried to

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the house of the *nongsiat*, where a *puja* is performed to some local deity, before the flesh is distributed. At Shangpung, when a tiger or a mithan is killed, the head is cut off, and is carried in triumph to a hill in the neighbourhood where there is a *duwan*, or altar, at the foot of an oak tree (*dieng sning*). The head is displayed on the altar, and worship offered to *u 'lei lyngdoh*, the God of the doloiship.

The Khasis make use of an ingenious species of spring gun for killing game, the spring gun being laid alongside a deer path in the jungle. A string stretched across the path, when touched, releases a bolt and spring, which latter impels a bamboo arrow with great force across the path. This spring gun is called *ka riam siat*. A pit-fall, with bamboo spikes at the bottom, is called *u 'liw lep*, and a trap of the pattern of the ordinary leopard trap is called *ka riam slung*. A noose attached to a long rope laid in a deer run is named *riam syrwiah*.

There is also *ka riam pap*, the principle of which is that an animal is attracted by a bait to walk on to a platform; the platform sinks under the weight of the animal, and a bolt is released which brings down a heavy roof from above weighted with stones, which crush the animal to death.

There are several means employed in snaring birds; one of the most common is to smear pieces of bamboo with the gum of the jack-tree, the former being tied to the branches of some wild fruit tree, upon which, when the fruit is ripe, the birds light and are caught by the bird lime. This is called *ka riam thit*. Another is a kind of spring bow made of bamboo which is laid on the ground in marshy places, such as are frequented by snipe and woodcock. This form of snare is unfortunately most common. A third is a cage into which birds are lured by means of a bait, the cage being hidden in the grass, and the entrance being so contrived that the birds can hop in but not out again. This is called *ka riam sim*.

FISHING.

Although there are some Khasis who fish with rod and line, it may be said that the national method of fishing is to poison

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quilt, made out of the bark of a tree, which is beaten out and then carefully woven, several layers of flattened bark being used before the right thickness is attained. This quilt is called by the Lyngams "*Ka syllar*" (Garo *simpak*). Food is cooked in earthen pots, but no plates are used, the broad leaves of the *mariang* tree taking their place. The leaves are thrown away after use, a fresh supply being required for each meal.

The Lyngams brew rice beer, they do not distil spirit; the beer is brewed according to the Khasi method. Games they have none, and there are no jovial archery meetings like those of the Khasis. The Lyngam methods of hunting are setting spring guns and digging pitfalls for game. The people say that now the Government and the Siem of Nongstoin have prohibited both of these methods of destroying game, they no longer employ them. But I came across a pitfall for deer not long ago in the neighbourhood of a village in the Lyngam country. The people declared it to be a very old one; but this I very much doubt, and I fear that these objectionable methods of hunting are still used. The Lyngams fish to a small extent with nets, but their idea of fishing, *par excellence*, is poisoning the streams, an account of which has already been given in this monograph. The Lyngams are omnivorous feeders, they may be said to eat everything except dogs, snakes, the *hulok* monkey, and lizards. They like rice, when they can get it; for sometimes the out-turn of their fields does not last them more than a few months. They then have to fall back on Jobstears and millet. They eat arums largely, and for vegetables they cook wild plantains and the young shoots of bamboos and cane plants. The Lyngams are divided up into exogamous clans in the same manner as the Khasis. The clans are overgrown families. The Lyngams have some stories regarding the founders of these clans, of which the following is a specimen:—"A woman was asleep under a *sohbar* tree in the jungle, a flower from which fell on her, and she conceived and bore a female child who was the ancestress of the Nongsohbar clan." Some of the stories of the origins of other clans do not bear repeating. There do not appear to be any hypergamous groups. As with the Khasis, it is a deadly sin to

won the money in the archery contest and now we should have a big feast. It is full moon now and much more beautiful during the night than the day. Oh, we are just having a good time." At once he swung his bunches of leaves and hopped away. The women take care of stirring the cooking pots. They are not choosy about the spoon. A bamboo, which a tired dancer might have just thrown away, is quite adequate for this purpose. When everything is ready, the people sit down in groups and eat the meat. Rice brandy is handed around. When the archers and other guests at the festival are more than sated and exhausted from all the dancing, they leave the place towards morning. 527

It should be pointed out that contrary to their usual customs the Khasi eat no rice at the great feast after the archery competition but only meat, with which brandy is drunk. There is a good deal of overindulgence in food and drink on this occasion. (32) [262]

32. P.F. Stegmiller, "Das Fest nach dem Pfeilschiessen" /The Feast after the Archery Contest/, Salvatoranische Mitteilungen /Salvatorian Communications/, 1910, No. 3.

4. Hunting Customs

Although there are all sorts of wild animals in the Khasi hills and Jaintia hills that can be hunted -- flying foxes which visit the orange gardens during the night, jackals, which annoy the villages with their howling, antelopes, does, deer and wild pigs which damage the rice fields, wild dogs, wolves, 224 136

224 bears, leopards and tigers, which seize their
136 prey not merely among the goats and calves, but also among the grown cattle, and at times are even dangerous to man; although there are lots of tasty birds -- quails, partridges, lapwings, coots and wild geese -- in spite of all this the Khasi are not actually hunters. Only when an opportunity either presents itself to catch such birds, or when a wild animal has shown itself or even caused damage in the village, then the Khasi go hunting. Exceptions occur. The Khasi who use bows and arrows from childhood on, who practise shooting conscientiously, dare to hunt bears, leopards, and tigers. [621] Today they often have guns for this purpose, but bown and arrows are always taken along.

224 When a lucky day has been determined upon
187 by egg throwing, (33) and often the hunting area

33. Dr. P.C. Becker, "Das Eierwerfen der Khasi" [Egg Throwing Among the Khasi], Anthropos, 1917-1918, pp. 494 ff.

is often determined in this way, the Khasi set
224 out with a pack of hounds. As soon as the dogs have come upon the scent of the wild animal, the Khasi begin driving it with howlings and noise. The first shooter is lucky (called u nongsiat by the Khasi) because he gets the lion's share of the prey. Whoever is the second one to hit the animal (called u nongban by the Khasi) also receives special consideration. The other shooters divide the rest of the slain animal among themselves after the hunting dogs have each been given a piece. The Khasi are very persevering on the hunt and do not bother about the time or the distance. For the efforts expended on the hunt are richly rewarded by the

triumphal procession with the slain beast through the home village. 224 •

A litter is prepared outside of the village of firm bamboo and decorated with palm leaves and other tree branches. In the middle of the litter a strong frame of bamboo is set up so that the spoil of the hunt (gazelle, antelope, bear, tiger, leopard, etc.) is placed on it belly down. The feet hang down stretched out. The head is held high by a forked branch, and a bunch of grass is placed in the animal's open mouth. The slain animal thus has an appearance of being alive. Arrow and bow are placed on the bier to the left and right of the animal. If the animal has been killed by a bullet, the Khasi carry the guns in their hands; if it was hit by an arrow, the first arrow which wounded it is placed in front on the bier before the animal. Then eight men lift the decorated bier with the slain animal on their shoulders and they all go towards the village with great ceremony. Blank shots announce the approach of the triumphal procession. The Khasi come from all sides. The hunters are congratulated, and all rejoice in the booty. Everybody watches the parade with pleasure. Some bring fresh rice brandy in bamboo pipes as thick as an arm; others bring betel nuts and water pipes. All this as well as other refreshments are offered the hunters. The crowd surges around the bier, and after the slain animal has been thoroughly discussed, the procession begins. 224 224 483 224

The village boys run noisily ahead. Beaters and hunters follow. Then comes the bier carried by eight men. To the left and right go the women and girls of the village, swinging branches and bunches of leaves. Shouts of joy resound. Several hundred people

224 have gathered and go either behind the bier or sit down on the edge of the road to be spectators. There is not much difference because the parade goes so slowly that it is hard to see if it is moving at all. The triumphal parade takes a full four hours to go a distance of about 800 to 900 meters. [622] Although the Khasi are never in a hurry, in this case they are the
224 slowest ever. But there is something ceremonial
533 in this and when the solo singer (the nongpha-war) raises his voice in extemporaneous song, to celebrate the dead animal when the crowd answers rejoicing and shouting, assuring the singer again and again that he is doing it well and thus spurring him on to new verses, when blank cartridges are shot off and the spectators are lit up brightly by torchlight, milling around in their colorful costumes, when the rice brandy has done its share, then the climax is reached!

The solo singer goes in front of the bier,[1] but with his face always turned towards it. Gesticulating violently with his hands, he bows now to the left, now to the right; he bends his upper body now forwards, now backwards. Jumping in the air from time to time, he only shows signs of joy and praise. According to his whim and invention he sings about the animal. The crowd joins in the improvised refrain, which is sometimes a repetition of the solo song, sometimes a shout of applause.

533 The solo singer sings approximately: (34)

34. P.D. Daunderer, "Khasi-Sitten" [Khasi Customs], Missionar [Missionary] 1905, pp. 179 ff.

Solo singer: "Hey! strong mother of bears, hungrilly thou eatest thine own children!"

1 [Carrying the hunters' prey-- Analyst]

533 S. : "Thou fledst into the thicket! Did that help thee?
Shyly thou retreated before the brave crowd of hunters!"
All: "Ha, ha, ho, huh!"
S. : "Quickly indeed thou retreated; quickly the pursuers pressed after thee and arrow and bow brought thee low!"
All: "Ha, ha, ho, huh!"
S. : "O mistress! Why didst thou come hither? Thou gavest thyself over to death and destruction — but we rejoice and celebrate and exult!"

Thus it continues for a long time. When one person has sung until he is hoarse, another takes his place and continues the song.

124 Exhausted from the exertions of the hunt, exhausted from the activity of the parade home, hoarse from shouting and screaming, heated from the enjoyment of brandy, the crowd drags itself to the house of the hunter who placed the first arrow or shot in the wild animal. Sacrifice is made there to the village god and the slain animal is divided up. The first shooter (u nongsiat) receives the hind quarters, the second shooter (u nongban) the front quarters of the animal.

In the Jaintia Hills the Synteng go to a hill in the neighborhood of the village when they have hunted and killed a tiger or a leopard. An altar is set up there under an oak tree and the head of the animal, which has been severed from its body, is placed on it and sacrificed to the u'lei lyngdoh (the god of the Dolloi district).

782 224

411 778 Arrow and bow are not only necessary weapons to the Khasi for hunting or pleasant sporting equipment for archery contests; Arrow and bow are also holy to him in a certain

16: McCormack E-4,5 (1956-1958) 1964
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sure and chemical fertilizers. Both level land and hillsides are cultivated by the same hand techniques: 3 × 6-foot patches are fashioned with walkways between, soils are overturned within the patches and allowed to dry, the soils are burned slowly and the ashes spread over the soil, and finally the seed is sown, either broadcast or sunk with the aid of the typical Khasi hoe. The coldest part of the upland enjoys a two-crop year, and Khasis often double crop as well. Paddy has long been found in the lowlands, in parts of Jaintia and Bhoi, the only places where the plow is found. Nowadays paddy is more and more seen in the uplands, together with a simple terracing and irrigation technology. Many upland Khasis have house gardens in which they raise a wide variety of vegetables, including pumpkins, cabbage, radishes, sweet potatoes, eggplant, and many others. Important crops in Bhoi country are paddy rice, lac, caoutchouc, cotton, bananas, and pineapples, in War, they are betel nut, pan leaf, oranges, and sugar cane. **Fishing and hunting.** Fishing is done by poisoning streams, but this is a subsistence activity only in the southern foothills. Hunting was formerly by bow and arrow or by traps, including spring guns and pitfalls, but was always primarily a sport. [Cf. Stegmiller 1925.] **Gathering.** Khasis once gathered about 150 species of wild plants, most of them for food, but some for medicine. Thrifty villagers still gather food plants, but there is no real dependence on gathering. Medicinal plants continue to be very important. **Domestic animals.** Fowl, goats, pigs, and cattle are bred both for meat and sacrifice. Milk was formerly not utilized, but is now so popular that specialists keep herds of milch cows. Pigs are used as village scavengers, but some also receive prepared food. Cattle and goats forage freely in the fields during the winter, but are herded by a communally hired herdsboy during the agricultural season. Most households keep chickens, primarily for their eggs, and a few keep ducks. A few horses are also seen. Dogs are pariahs, except for hunting dogs. Cats are popular. **Food and stimulants.** The staple food of Khasis is boiled rice, together with the dried fish which is imported from Sylhet. Boiled beef, pork, and chicken are relished, but beyond the means of most. Meals are taken twice a day, in the morning and evening, although farmers also take a midday meal in the field, and others may take tea and cold sweet potatoes or rice bread. Certain foods are taboo to certain sibs. Stimulants are extremely common, especially betel nut, which is often accompanied by a bit of tobacco. Tobacco is also smoked as cigarettes and in hookah and other pipes. Every village has one or more household taverns, where distilled rice whisky is cooked and sold by the glass and by the bottle. Imported opium had spread widely in the malarious Bhoi country, but controls instituted in the 1940s have been fairly successful. All stimulants were once taken by men, women, and

241 243 184 178 244 241 184 226 224 222 [278] 231 [234] [233] [235] 262 264 262 184 276 273 275 276 177

20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 AR? Khasi AR?

648 65 at Dárjiling, who reported unfavourably on them. They have since been made over to the State of Hangkhas, who is responsible for their being kept clear of weeds and protected against fire. Up to the close of 1873-76 the total expenditure had been Rs. 670, or £67, 0s. 0d.

136 FAUNA NATURA.—Tigers, elephants, rhinoceros, bufaloes, seláo or wild cows, bears, leopards, wolves, jackals, foxes, wild hog, and several kinds of deer abound in the Khási and Jáintia Hills. The expense of keeping down tigers in the shape of Government rewards amounted to £44, 10s. 0d. in 1869-70. The rate of reward now paid is Rs. 25 or £2, 10s. 0d. per head. No reward has ever been given for the destruction of venomous serpents. The number of deaths from wild beasts and snake-bite reported to the police amounted to 28 in 1866-67, 18 in 1867-68, 16 in 1868-69, and 26 in 1869-70. The small game found in the Hills consists of black partridges, hill partridges, quails, ducks, teal, snipe, and woodcocks. The *mahsir* fish is caught in the rivers. No regular trade is carried on in the skins of wild animals; and, except in the case of wild elephants, the *few* natives are not made to contribute towards the wealth of the people.

224 648 651 ELEPHANTS.—Wild elephants are found in the lower ranges of the hills, and in the gorges opening on the valleys of the Surmá and the Brahmaputra. Each State in the Khási Hills and each subdivision in the Jáintia Hills constitutes a separate hunting circle or *mahál*. In the Khási States the conditions of elephant hunting are governed by rules framed in 1873-73 by the Chief Commissioner, and approved by the Government of India. These rules provide, (1) that the British Government will make no claim to royalty on account of elephants caught in the Khási Hills; (2) that one half of the proceeds of the sale of each elephant caught shall be paid over to the chief whose State forms the *mahál*, and the other half retained by Government; (3) that if a chief wishes to hunt elephants on his own account, the *mahál* composed of his State shall be reserved from sale, and a special arrangement shall be made with him on the basis that half the proceeds of the hunting shall accrue to Government. A special form of hunting licence in accordance with these rules has been settled by the Chief Commissioner. In the Jáintia Hills, as being British territory, the ordinary Assam rules are in force, in accordance with which leases of the *mahals* are sold at intervals of two years to the highest bidder at

20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 ART Khasi ART

public notice. The Assam rules, as revised in 1873-74, reserve to Government the right of pre-emption at the price of Rs. 600 (£60) in the case of every elephant captured between 8 feet and 11 feet in height. For every elephant caught that is not purchased by Government, a royalty of Rs. 100 (£10) is payable within one month after capture. Certain methods of hunting are prohibited. 224 648 651

POPULATION.—Prior to 1851 no attempt had been made at a Census of the Khási and Jáintia Hills, but in 1851 the Deputy-Commissioner approximately estimated the population at 106,915 souls. In 1871, at the time of the Bengal Census, operations were set on foot in these Hills; but on a less elaborate system than in Regulation Districts. In the Khási Hills, the Census of the various petty States was effected through the chiefs; in British territory in the Jáintia Hills, the *dolloi* conducted the enumeration; while at Shillong and other places under direct administration, the work was done by officers attached to the Deputy-Commissioner's office. The results are thus returned:—Adults—males, 59,887; and females, 62,038: total adults, 121,980. Children under twelve years of age—males, 28,611; and females, 28,543: total children, 57,154. Total males, 88,553; total females, 90,629. Grand total, 179,182; proportion of males, 48·56 per cent. The total area of the District, according to the latest returns, is 6,133 square miles, which gives an average density of 29 persons per square mile. The number of villages is 1,023; the number of houses, 30,535, of which 390 are returned as of the better sort. 648 659 161 161 162.

ETHNOLOGY. DIVISIONS OR TRIBE PEOPLE.—The population consists almost exclusively of aboriginal tribes and races, viz. Khásis and Syntengs (who form the bulk of the inhabitants of the Khási and Jáintia Hills respectively), Wáiis, Garos, and Kukis. The only other dwellers in the Hills are the European officials and military officers at Shillong and Chattak Páinji, with their native servants and followers, a few Bengáli officials, and the sepoys of a regiment of native infantry. The classification of the inhabitants according to religion shows:—121,183 aboriginals; 363 Hindus; 60 Muhammadans; and 118 Christians, including 33 Europeans, 8 Eurasians, and 83 native converts. 563 162. [648] [799]

THE KHÁSIAS.—The following sketch of the physical characteristics and customs of the Khásis has been kindly furnished to me by the Deputy-Commissioner, Colonel Rice; it is reproduced almost verbatim from his report and on his authority:— 144